

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: 12 October 2017

Agenda Item: Timber Gulch Access Easement (R3)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Endorsement

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 Min

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Background: The Department proposes, through the Accessing Public Lands Program, to purchase a permanent road easement across private land to allow access to 3,400 acres of BLM in the Timber Gulch area on the southwest side of McCartney Mountain, 5 miles east of Glen. The nearest public access to BLM land in this area is 1.5 miles to the east; there is no public access to McCartney Mountain west of the proposed Timber Gulch access.

The Department would purchase approximately 0.14 miles of primitive road across private property connecting the county road to an open route on the BLM and convey the easement to the BLM. This acquisition follows the BLM travel/access plan for the McCartney Mountain area. The public would have year-round access to this road.

The Timber Gulch access would allow hunters and recreationists 2 miles of motorized travel up the flank of McCartney Mountain for easier access to Timber Gulch. The easement will increase hunter pressure on a local elk herd of 150-200 animals in an area where chronic game damage on private land occurs. In addition, this access will also be used by spring recreationists who like to horn hunt in the upper draws of the mountain.

The Department has secured partnerships with Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (\$10,000) Skyline Sportsmen Association (\$1,000) and Jefferson Valley Sportsmen (\$1,000) towards the purchase this easement. Additional needed funding will come from FWP's Access Public Lands program.

Public Involvement Process & Results: This project proposal has been discussed with the landowner/seller, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Skyline Sportsmen Association, and Jefferson Valley Sportsmen. All groups expressed preliminary support for the project. Upon endorsement, a complete environmental assessment with a public comment period will be conducted.

Alternatives and Analysis: Purchase of a permanent access across private property in the Timber Gulch area of McCartney Mountain 5 miles east of Glen.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: This proposal aligns with the mission of both FWP and the BLM to secure public access to public resources.

Proposed Motion: I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve proceeding with further analysis and conducting an environmental assessment for the Timber Gulch Access acquisition.